Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. –17. (Withdrawn)

18. (Previously presented) A material suitable for use in the manufacture of a shoe stiffener comprising a layer of a stiffener composition disposed between two layers of sheet material, wherein the stiffener composition comprises a polymeric material which is stiff at ambient temperature and is pliable, adhesive and flowable under pressure at an elevated temperature, wherein at least one of said layers of sheet material has openings therein of a size sufficient to allow the polymeric material, when subjected to elevated temperature and pressure, to pass through the openings, and wherein the polymeric material does not pass through the openings when the material is at the ambient temperature.

19. (Previously presented) A material according to claim 18 wherein said elevated temperature is between 50°C and 90°C, said openings have a size range from 0.15 mm^2 to 5 mm^2 and the melt viscosity of the polymeric material is measured at 100°C being in the range of 100 to 10,000 Pascal times a second.

20. (Previously presented) A material suitable for the use in manufacture of a shoe stiffener comprising a stiffener composition disposed between two layers of sheet material, wherein the stiffener composition comprises a polymeric material which is stiff at ambient temperature below 50°C but is pliable and adhesive at an elevated temperature between 50°C and 90°C and has a melt viscosity measured at 100°C in the range from 100 to 10,000 Pascal times a second, wherein at least one of said layers of sheet material has openings therein in a size

range from 0.15 mm^2 to 5 mm^2 and wherein the polymeric material is adhesive and is contained within one or more of the openings of the sheet material.

21. (Previously presented) A material according to claims 18 or 20, wherein the melt viscosity of the polymeric material at 100°C is in the range of 900 to 2500 Pascal times a second.

22. (Previously presented) A material according to claims 18 or 20, wherein the openings have a size range from about 0.3 mm^2 to 1.5 mm^2.

23. (Previously presented) A material according to claims 18 or 20, wherein the shoe stiffener material has a thickness between about 0.4 mm to 2.00 mm.

24. (Previously presented) A material according to claims 18 or 20, wherein the stiffener composition comprises between 85% and 30% by weight of said polymeric material and 15% and 70% by weight of particulate filler.

25. (Previously presented) A material according to claim 24, wherein the particulate filler has a size between 50 microns and 500 microns.

26. (Previously presented) A material according to claim 24, wherein the size of the particulate filler is between 100 microns and 400 microns.

27. (Previously presented) A material according claim 24, wherein the filler is mica.

28. (Previously presented) A material according to claim 24, wherein the filler is talc.

29. (Previously presented) A material according to claims 18 or 20, wherein the polymeric material comprises polycaprolactone.

30. (Previously presented) A material according to any one of claims 18 or 20 wherein the polymeric material comprises poly(tetramethylene-adipate).

31. (Previously presented) A material according to claims 18 or 20, wherein at least one of said layers of sheet material is a woven fabric.

32. (Previously presented) A material according to claims 18 or 20, wherein at least one of said layers of sheet material is a knitted fabric.

33. (Previously presented) A material according to claims 18 to 20, wherein at least one of said layers of sheet material is an apertured non-woven fabric.

34. (Withdrawn)

35. (Withdrawn)

36. (Withdrawn)

37. (Previously presented) A shoe stiffener comprising: a shoe stiffener composition disposed between two layers of sheet material and an upper, wherein the stiffener composition comprises a polymeric material which is stiff at ambient temperature below 50°C but is pliable and adhesive at an elevated temperature between 50°C and 90°C and has a melt viscosity measured at 100°C in the range from 100 to 10,000 Pascal times a second, wherein at least one of said layers of sheet material has openings therein of a size sufficient to allow the polymeric material to pass through the openings, and wherein the polymeric material is adhesive, has passed through one or more of the openings of the sheet material and is adhered to the upper.

38. (Previously presented) The shoe stiffener of claim 37, wherein both of the layers of sheet material have openings therein of a size sufficient to allow the polymeric material to pass through the openings.

39. (Previously presented) The shoe stiffener of claim 38, wherein the shoe stiffener further comprises a lining material.

40. (Previously presented) The shoe stiffener of claim 39, wherein the adhesive has passed through at least one opening in each of the sheet materials, and is adhered to the upper on one side and the lining material on the other side.

41. (Previously presented) The shoe stiffener of claim 40, wherein the lining material comprises a non-woven textile fiber.